



California Postsecondary Education Commission

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UC Irvine Awarded \$999,666 Improving Teacher Quality Grant

SACRAMENTO — October 22, 2007 — The University of California, Irvine has won funding for a new professional development project to help improve teaching in kindergarten through second grade in the core content areas of science and mathematics. The university was awarded a four-year grant of \$999,666 by the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) in a statewide competition. The project, titled “Science & Math Impacting Learners of English (SMILE),” is a partnership between UC Irvine and the Compton Unified School District in Los Angeles County. It will provide 75 teachers each year with intensive institutes and academic year follow-up aimed at improving science and math instruction in ways that also strengthen the English Language skills of their students. In all, 225 teachers will receive training, affecting more than 7000 K-2 students in the district. The project includes sessions to help elementary principals provide better instructional support for the teachers; it also serves parents with evening training sessions in Everyday Literacy for Families. The project, which will be administered by UC Irvine’s Center for Educational Partnerships, involves faculty from the School of Physical Sciences and the Department of Education.

The grant is part of the federal Improving Teacher Quality Program funded under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. It is the latest edition of a long-standing federal program aimed at improving student achievement through professional development for teachers. In the two decades that CPEC has administered the program, more than \$93 million in grants have been awarded to colleges and universities working with high-need K-12 schools throughout California. The 2007 grants all focus on supporting teachers in kindergarten through second grade in participating schools. They also require rigorous evaluation research to demonstrate how the professional development affects student achievement as well as teacher practice.

While the professional development provided by the grants is vitally needed, the research requirement is especially important, according to CPEC Executive Director Murray Haberman. “Being required to demonstrate the impact of the professional development on student achievement, not just on teacher practice, is critical and supports CPEC’s overall commitment to accountability in educational programs,” Haberman said.

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Olivia Singh, chair of the Commission, said the grants play an important role in making sure every student has a highly qualified teacher. “The program has had a long-term impact on helping teachers strengthen their content knowledge and their understanding of effective teaching strategies—key elements of education reform,” Singh noted. “UC Irvine and its partner schools should be proud of the quality of their proposal and its potential for improving teaching and learning in Compton.”

The California Postsecondary Education Commission advises the Governor and Legislature on higher education policy and fiscal issues. Its primary focus is to ensure that the state’s educational resources are used effectively to provide Californians with postsecondary education opportunities. More information about the Commission and its work can be found on its website at www.cpec.ca.gov. For more information about the state program, contact Karen Humphrey, Administrator, Improving Teacher Quality Program, at 916-445-1504 or khumphrey@cpec.ca.gov. For information on the project described above, contact Dr. George Miller at 949-824-6649 or gemiller@uci.edu.

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